

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
AID-05 /070 W  
-----006353 031216Z /43

R 030656Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9141  
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2765

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT BG  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: WILL OSMANI STAY IN THE RACE?

REFS: A. DACCA 2734; B. DACCA 2764

1. REFTTEL (B) REPORTS THE STATEMENTS OF AWAMI LEAGUE  
PRESIDENT UKIL, AND SENIOR POLITICIAN ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN  
AS WELL AS THE PRESS CONFERENCE OF OPPOSITION CANDIDATE  
OSMANI, ALL ON MAY 2. EACH IN SOME WAY ALLUDES TO THE  
MILITARY POLSITION RETAINED BY PRESIDENT ZIA AND EACH  
EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT THE CONTINUATION OF MARTIAL  
LAW DURING THE POLLING PERIOD.

2. TODAY (MAY 3) IS SET ASIDE IN THE POLLING SCHEDULE  
FOR THE SCRUTINY OF NOMINATIONS AND IT APPEARS CERTAIN  
THAT THE QUESTION OF RESIDENT ZIA'S CONTINUATION  
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AS AN OFFICER OF THE BANGLADESH ARMY WILL BE RAISED BY  
HIS OPPONENTS.

3. WHILE THE FOURTH AMENDMENT APPEARS TO CLEAR THE LEGAL  
WAY FOR ZIA TO CONTEST, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT UKIL AND  
ATAUR RAHMAN HAVE RAISED THE ISSUE IN POLITICAL TERMS.  
THE LATTER USES THIS AS ONE REASON FOR HIS DECLARATION

OF NON-PARTICIPATION; THE FORMER AS A CONDITION, WHICH IF IT IS NOT ELIMINATED, MAY CAUSE THE DEMOCRATIC UNITED FRONT TO WITHDRAW ITS CANDIDATE OSMANI.

4. THE UKIL-OSMANI DEMANDS UNQUESTIONABLY PLACE ZIA IN A DILEMMA. IF HE YIELDS AND RESIGNS HIS COMMISSION HE WILL BE SEEN TO HAVE DONE SO UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE OPPOSITION WITH THE CONSEQUENT WEAKENING OF HIS OWN POSITION. SUCH ACTION COULD BE TURNED TO ZIA'S ADVANTAGE BUT ONLY WITH SOME DIFFICULTY. ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE ZIA NOT TO RESIGN THIS COULD LEAD TO OSMANI'S WITHDRAWAL AND THE ELECTION WOULD THEN BE ALL BUT UNCONTESTED WHATEVER THE OTHER NINE CANDIDATES DO (THEY HAVE UNTIL MAY 7 TO WITHDRAW). AN UNCONTESTED ELECTION WOULD BE EMBARRASSING TO ZIA AND WOULD NOT MEET THE INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE DECISION TO HOLD AN ELECTION.

5. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE TOW OTHER POSSIBILITIES. ZIA'S NOMINATION COULD BE REJECTED, ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD PROBABLY LEAD TO A WRIT PETITION ASKING FOR HIS REIN-STATEMENT. IF ZIA'S NOMINATION IS ACCEPTED, THE OPPOSITION COULD FILE A WRIT PETITION ASKING THAT THE ACCEPTANCE BE DENIED. HOW QUICKLY THE COURTS WOULD BE ABLE (OR WILLING) TO ACT ON A PETITION IS QUESTIONABLE, BUT IT WOULD POSSIBLY SET BACK THE ELECTION SCHEDULE AND IF IT DID SO WOULD MOVE IT INTO EVEN LESS FAVORABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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AS WOULD THE DELAY ALREADY DEMANDED BY UKIL AND ATAUR RAHMAN (REF B).

6. THE ANSWERS TO THE RESULT OF SCRUTINY WILL BE AVAILABLE TODAY, BUT WE MAY HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL MAY 7 TO GET THE ANSWERS TO THE OTHER POSSIBLE SCENARIOS. SCHNEIDER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION CANDIDATES  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 may 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Review Content Flags:**  
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**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
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**Subject:** PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: WILL OSMANI STAY IN THE RACE?  
**TAGS:** PINT, BG  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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